

IN THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for collection and lateral flow chromatography of an oral fluid, the apparatus comprising:

a housing having a cavity;

an essentially non-absorbing capillary matrix extending from within the housing and protruding out from the housing for receiving oral fluid;

a lateral flow chromatography strip within the housing, wherein the lateral flow chromatography strip contains at least one reagent that is used to detect or quantify at least one analyte in the oral fluid and is in fluid ~~planar-flow~~ communication with the capillary matrix; and wherein the capillary matrix is composed of a material different from the material comprising the lateral flow chromatography strip; and

a blocking strip within the housing coupled between and in fluid ~~planar-flow~~ communication with the capillary matrix and the lateral flow chromatography strip, wherein the blocking strip is impregnated with at least one blocking agent which reduces non-specific binding on the lateral flow chromatography strip.

2-52. (Canceled)

53. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the blocking strip further comprises a detergent, a chelating agent, or a buffer, or mixtures thereof.

54. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein at least one blocking agent is selected from bovine serum albumin, deoxycholate, and n-lauroyl sarcosine.

55. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a conjugate strip within the housing coupled between the blocking strip and the lateral flow chromatography strip, wherein the conjugate strip contains lateral flow chromatography reagents.

56. (Canceled)

57. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the ~~at least one analyte to be detected or quantified by~~ at least one reagent on the lateral chromatography strip is an analyte binding moiety selected from the group consisting of ~~antibodies to~~ HIV, ~~antibodies to~~ HTLV, ~~antibodies to~~ *Helicobacter pylori*, ~~antibodies to~~ hepatitis, ~~antibodies to~~ measles, ~~antibodies to~~ mumps, ~~antibodies to~~ rubella, cotinine, cocaine, benzoylecgonine, benzodiazepine ~~benzodiazepine~~, tetrahydrocannabinol, nicotine, ethanol theophylline, phenytoin, acetaminophen, lithium, diazepam, nortryptiline, secobarbital, phenobarbital, theophylline, testosterone, estradiol, 17-hydroxyprogesterone, progesterone, thyroxine, thyroid stimulating hormone, follicle stimulating hormone, luteinizing hormone, transforming growth factor alpha, epidermal growth factor, insulin-like growth factors I and II, growth hormone release inhibiting factor, IGA, sex hormone binding globulin, glucose, caffeine, cholesterol, corticosteroid binding globulin, PSA, DHEA binding glycoprotein, and combinations thereof.

58. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 57, wherein at least one reagent analyte is an antigen of antibody ~~to~~ HIV.

59. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 57, wherein at least one reagent analyte is an antigen of antibody ~~to~~ hepatitis.

60. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the lateral flow chromatography strip contains lateral flow chromatography reagents.

61. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the capillary matrix is paddle-shaped.

62. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the capillary matrix has an average pore size ranging from about 40 μm to about 250 μm .

63. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the lateral flow chromatography strip is at least partially disposed into the cavity of the housing.

64. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the housing includes at least one inspection site providing visual inspection of reagents at selected sites on the lateral flow chromatography strip.

65. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:

a conjugate strip within the housing coupled between the blocking strip and the lateral flow chromatography strip and contains lateral flow chromatography reagents;

wherein the lateral flow chromatography strip extends into the cavity along the housing to an inspection site on the housing; and

at least one inspection site from an exterior of the housing to the lateral chromatography strip to enable visual inspection of reagents at selected sites on the lateral chromatography strip.

66. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 65, wherein the capillary matrix protrudes out from the housing and is in flow communication with the lateral flow chromatography strip.

67. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for collection and lateral flow chromatography of an oral fluid, the apparatus comprising:

a housing having a cavity;

a collection pad of an essentially non-absorbing capillary matrix extending from within the housing and protruding out from the housing for receiving oral fluid;

a blocking pad within the housing and coupled between and in fluid ~~planar~~-flow communication with the capillary matrix and a lateral flow chromatographic strip, wherein the blocking strip is impregnated with at least one blocking agent which reduces non-specific binding on the lateral flow chromatography strip;

a conjugate pad within the housing and coupled between the blocking pad and the lateral flow chromatography strip, wherein the conjugate pad contains lateral flow chromatography reagents;

the lateral flow chromatography strip within the housing, wherein the lateral flow chromatography strip extends into the cavity along the housing to an inspection site on the housing; and

at least one inspection site from an exterior of the housing to the lateral flow chromatography strip to enable visual inspection of reagents at selected sites on the lateral chromatography strip; and

wherein the lateral flow chromatography strip contains at least one reagent that is used to detect or quantify at least one analyte in the oral fluid and is in fluid ~~planar-flow~~ communication with the capillary matrix; and wherein the capillary matrix is composed of a material different from the material comprising the lateral flow chromatography strip.

68. (Previously Presented) A kit for the detection of an analyte in an oral fluid comprising:

the apparatus of claim 1; and

a buffer, reagent, or detection reagent for collection and lateral flow chromatography of an oral fluid.

69. (Previously Presented) A kit for the detection of an analyte in an oral fluid comprising:

the apparatus of claim 67; and

a buffer, reagent, or detection reagent for collection and lateral flow chromatography of an oral fluid.

70. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 53, wherein the chelating agent is EDTA.

71. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein at least one blocking agent is selected from bovine serum albumin, deoxycholate, and n-lauroyl sarcosine and wherein the chelating agent is EDTA.

72. (New) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the at least one reagent on the lateral chromatography strip is an antigen selected from the group consisting of HIV, HTLV, *Helicobacter pylori*, hepatitis, measles, mumps, rubella, cotinine, cocaine, benzoylecgonine, benzodiazepine, tetrahydrocannabinol, nicotine, ethanol theophylline, phenytoin, acetaminophen, lithium, diazepam, nortryptiline, secobarbital, phenobarbital, theophylline, testosterone, estradiol, 17-hydroxyprogesterone, progesterone, thyroxine, thyroid stimulating hormone, follicle stimulating hormone, luteinizing hormone, transforming growth factor alpha, epidermal growth factor, insulin-like growth factors I and II, growth hormone release inhibiting factor, IGA, sex hormone binding globulin, glucose, caffeine, cholesterol, corticosteroid binding globulin, PSA, DHEA binding glycoprotein, and combinations thereof.

73. (New) The apparatus of claim 72, wherein said antigen is HIV.

74. (New) The apparatus of claim 72, wherein said antigen is hepatitis.

75. (New) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the at least one reagent on the lateral chromatography strip is an antibody to a member of the group consisting of HIV, HTLV, *Helicobacter pylori*, hepatitis, measles, mumps, rubella, cotinine, cocaine, benzoylecgonine, benzodiazepine, tetrahydrocannabinol, nicotine, ethanol theophylline, phenytoin, acetaminophen, lithium, diazepam, nortryptiline, secobarbital, phenobarbital, theophylline, testosterone, estradiol, 17-hydroxyprogesterone, progesterone, thyroxine, thyroid stimulating hormone, follicle stimulating hormone, luteinizing hormone, transforming growth factor alpha, epidermal growth factor, insulin-like growth factors I and II, growth hormone release inhibiting factor, IGA, sex hormone binding globulin, glucose, caffeine, cholesterol, corticosteroid binding globulin, PSA, DHEA binding glycoprotein, and combinations thereof.

76. (New) The apparatus of claim 75, wherein said antibody is to HIV.

77. (New) The apparatus of claim 75, wherein said antibody is to hepatitis.

78. (New) An apparatus for collection and lateral flow chromatography of an oral fluid, the apparatus comprising:

a housing having a cavity;

an essentially non-absorbing capillary matrix extending from within the housing and protruding out from the housing for receiving oral fluid;

a lateral flow chromatography strip within the housing, wherein the lateral flow chromatography strip contains at least one reagent that is used to detect or quantify at least one analyte of HIV or hepatitis in the oral fluid and is in fluid communication with the capillary matrix; and wherein the capillary matrix is composed of a material different from the material comprising the lateral flow chromatography strip; and

a blocking strip within the housing coupled between and in fluid communication with the capillary matrix and the lateral flow chromatography strip, wherein the blocking strip is

impregnated with at least one blocking agent which reduces non-specific binding on the lateral flow chromatography strip.